

Remarks

The Examiner is thanked for his time during several telephone conversations on January 10, 13, 19, and 20, 2006. The Examiner is also thanked for implying during these conversations and on page 5 of the Final Office Action of December 29, 2005, that the amendments to claims 18 and 31 shown above and discussed below may contain allowable subject matter.

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 18 and 31 are sought to be amended. Upon entering this amendment, Claims 18-26 and 28-31 are pending in the application, with 18 and 31 being the independent claims. No new matter has been entered by any amendments.

Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 18, 19, 21-26 and 28-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over WO Patent No. WO 98/28644 to Schultz ("Schultz") (using U.S. Patent No. 6,366,410 as a translated document). Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schultz in view of U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0036832 to Schultz ("Schultz PPA"). Applicant respectively traverses these rejections.

Claim 18 recites at least a third lens group consisting of a single lens element made from a single material having a single index of refraction that receives the beam of radiation from the second lens group and controls field characteristics of the beam of radiation at a patterning device plane.

Claim 31 recites at least a third lens group consisting of a single lens made from one material having one index of refraction and having a spherical receiving surface and an aspherical transmitting surface.

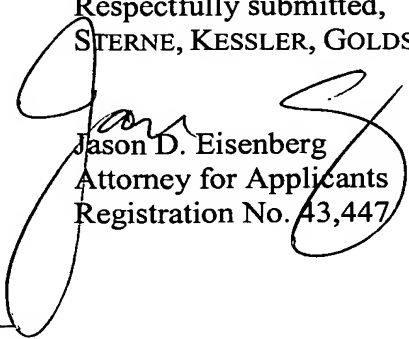
The Examiner admits on page 3 of the Office Action of September 6, 2005 and implies, if not admits, on page 5 of the final Office Action of December 29, 2005 that Schultz lacks specific reference to the third lens group containing only one lens. Thus, Applicants have amended claims 18 and 31 to recite at least "a third lens group consisting of a single lens." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 18 and 31.

Dependent claims 19-26 and 28-30 are allowable over the applied references for at least the same reason that independent claim 18 is allowable. The Shultz PPA adds nothing to cure the deficiencies of Shultz with respect to the present invention.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided. Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.


Jason D. Eisenberg
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 43,447

Date: 3/28/06
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600 508392.1

SKGF Ref. No.: 1857.0910001